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SCIENTIST OF THE SUNRISE

THE recent appearance of the seventh impression of Sir Peter Buck's book* together with the forthcoming visit of the author himself to his New Zealand homeland is reason enough for brief notice in these columns of *Vikings of the Sunrise*. It is now nine years since the first edition of *Vikings* was published, a good many more years since Buck first began to chew over the idea of taking time from his more technical writings to summarise in a popular fashion that story of the wanderings of the Polynesian people which has absorbed Buck's interests and professional life since he first devoted himself to the scientific study of his own people. This book then is the result of many years of patient investigation, careful weighing of the scientific evidence, and collection of first-hand material. It is simple, readable, authoritative, and enlivened by many anecdotes and stories which are always used to mark a significant analysis or overthrow a hocus-pocus theory. The book is likely to remain for many years to come the first, best, and most authentic account of the wanderings, migrations, and final settlement of some of the greatest seamen and navigators of which the world has record.

THERE are two further books which all his friends would like Sir Peter Buck to write. One is his autobiography. There can be few New Zealanders who have lived so colourful and cosmopolitan a life as Buck, or have so many stories to tell. Growing up on the Taranaki coast, son of a Maori chieftainess and an Irish father (hence his real pride in his dual name), student at Te Aute in Thornton's definitive, tradition-making days, medical student and rugby specialist at Otago, then in turn, doctor, medical officer in the Islands, director of Maori Hygiene, politician, cabinet minister, soldier with a distinguished and decorated record, and finally, return to his first love, anthropology, and now director of the world-famous Bishop Museum at Honolulu, professor of anthropology at Yale, and acknowledged world authority on the Polynesian and other Pacific peoples—this is a long way for the little Maori boy who 60 or so years ago played happily in the mud-flats of the Mokau river, to have gone in a short lifetime. Buck's success is a measure of the enthusiasm, personality, hard work, and sheer intellectual capacity that he has brought to every task which has absorbed his interests. It is a success story in a now almost out-of-date New Zealand tradition. But it is still a story that is capable of interesting his many friends who have always admired and respected Buck personally, while envying his persistence, industry, and ability to get a job done. It is also a story that is an integral part of the history of Maori-Pakeha relations in the first three decades of this century. As

such it is worth the telling for the sake of his own Maori kinsmen here in New Zealand.

THE second book that Buck should write is an authoritative account of the social life, the art, culture, and economy of his beloved Polynesians. The people of Polynesia are probably among the most over-written people in the world as far as mere bibliographic bulk is concerned. They still remain, however, among the least known because much of the popular literature on Polynesia is pretty worthless, being either tall and scandalous travellers' tales or incomplete and partial misunderstandings. There exists at the moment no book which can be recommended unreservedly to an inquirer who desires an overall view of the social life of the Polynesian peoples. But Buck knows most of the island groups at first hand. His name is household knowledge north, south, east, and west, in every part of Polynesia. His mana is equally great on coral atoll and high volcanic island. He has studied in detail all the old explorers and missionary records for each of the groups about which he has written his technical monographs and scientific papers. He is in the unique position therefore of being the one scientist in the world who could give us this simple, popular, yet scientifically accurate book about the Polynesian people. Such a book could not only dispel many of the fantasies that still linger in the popular mind about the South Seas, but it would also be of great value to all those who may wish to follow with intelligent interest the activities of the newly-established South Seas Regional Commission in the central and eastern Pacific.

Buck is a busy administrator, a hard-working scientist with only the Lord knows how many scientific monographs still to write before he can say his scientific life is finished, a friendly person who likes to joke and talk the clock round with his friends, a serious idealist with the future welfare of his Polynesian people at stake. Perhaps it is too much to expect from him his autobiography. But at least the world would appreciate his written understandings and insights into the social life and culture of the Vikings of the Sunrise. Maybe Buck's visit to New Zealand will help him to understand the imperative need for such a book written by one who may not inaptly be called a modern Viking of the Sunrise.

—Ernest Beaglehole

It Wins Hands Down

Yes—here's a winning tip for doing away with all traces of soiled looks and ingrained dirt in your hands after gardening and those not-so-clean odd jobs. Rub a little "Clever Mary" into the hands, then wash and see how clear and fresh your skin is again. "Clever Mary" is as much at home on the hands as it is in the kitchen and bathroom. Never be without it.

**Vikings of the Sunrise*. By Peter H. Buck. J. B. Lippincott Co., New York.